



NEWS RELEASE

32ND INFANTRY BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM

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Caring and Sharing: Wisconsin program sends packages to deployed troops

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BAGHDAD – Hands frantically tearing at tape and cardboard; an ear-to-ear smile; the excitement of not knowing what is inside; the joy of knowing somebody cares enough to send something. It sounds like Christmas, but it's not. It's an eager soldier opening a care package.

Troops all over Iraq get care packages from groups or anonymous individuals, but 2nd Lt. Johnathan Meyer, an officer who screens applicants for entry into the International Zone in Baghdad with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, has known the woman who sent this package since he was a toddler.

"She was my preschool teacher," said Meyer, who grew up in Neenah, Wis. "It's kind of a unique situation; it's kind of funny that she is still taking care of me 28 years later, through all I have been through."

The package is from Linda Hughes, a teacher at Rascals and Rockers, a Christian day school for children up to 12 years old in Cambria, Wis. She has taught there for 42 years, including when Meyer was a young student. Today she is the coordinator of the service learning project "A Case of Caring and Sharing" which sends care packages to troops throughout the world.

Hughes and her students prepare the packages as part of a lesson focused on community outreach and developing a sense of volunteerism in the students.

"We do a lot of projects in the community so they grow up caring and willing to help someone in need," said Hughes.

Hughes started the "Case of Caring and Sharing" program after Sept. 11, 2001 and has sent packages ever since. She asks people to send her names and addresses of troops to receive packages and hopes the soldiers share their packages with others.

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“That’s one thing Linda has encouraged me to do; if anybody needed anything, if there was a troop that didn’t get much from back home, to be sure to let her know and she would do what she could. She sent many care packages to many different people,” Meyer said.

Each package includes a letter and several drawings colored by the students.

“I like seeing the drawings. Their imagination takes you back to when you were little. Children are so proud and happy to be doing this for troops, it shows through. I like that the most,” Meyer said.

Hughes said she plans to continue sending care packages until she doesn’t have any more soldiers to receive them. In the meantime, Meyer and other soldiers will continue to appreciate the hard work Hughes and her students put into this program.

“It humbles me to know that there is such a big effort back home to show support for us,” Meyer said. “To me that shows patriotism in its many forms.”

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Photo thumbnails



CUTLINE: In Wisconsin, Linda Hughes (far right, in red), a teacher at Rascals and Rockers day school, and her students prepare packages for deployed troops as part of lesson focused on community outreach. *Photo by Staff Sgt. Mary Flynn*



CUTLINE: Students from Rascals and Rockers day school eagerly drop off packages at the post office for deployed troops. *Photo by Staff Sgt. Mary Flynn*



CUTLINE: Linda Hughes, the coordinator of “A Case of Caring and Sharing” service learning project prepares to deliver packages to the post office. *Photo by Staff Sgt. Mary Flynn*

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CUTLINE: In Baghdad, 2nd Lt. Johnathan Meyer cuts through the tape of a care package sent by a long-time friend. *Photo by Spc. Tyler Lasure*

Note: High resolution photo can be downloaded from the Wisconsin National Guard Web site (<http://dma.wi.gov/dma/news/media.asp>) or email tim.donovan@us.army.mil.